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MR. WAYNE AND ARGENTINA; AFGHANISTAN; MERCOSUR
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11. SUMMARY STATEMENT

Weekend papers cover an interview with journalist Robert Fisk on the war in Iraq; the UN asking the US to close the Guantanamo prison; the US/Latin American ties in the opinion of Argentine President Nestor Kirchner; the impact of the USG decision to militarize the US/Mexican border; Mr. Wayne's concerns about Argentina; the war in Afghanistan; and the current fragile status of Mercosur.

12. OPINION PIECES AND KEY STORIES

- "'The only thing occupation forces want to do is get out of Iraq'"

Eleonora Gosman, on special assignment in Sao Paulo for leading "Clarín," makes an interview with Robert Fisk, foreign correspondent in the Middle East, who opines (05/21) "... 'Many American and British soldiers will die before troops leave. Insurgency has almost 40,000 men and if Shiites join Sunnis they could be 200,000, which is exactly the number of occupation forces. Occupying forces are living in real fortresses and live under the land.'

"... 'Arabs lost their fear to resist and the US project seems exhausted.'"

- "The UN asks the US to close the Guantanamo prison"

Daily-of-record "La Nación" reports (05/20) "The UN Committee against Torture asked the US yesterday to close Guantanamo prison in Cuba and asked Washington to eliminate all forms of mistreatment against detainees, as well as to avoid the use of secret prisons in its global war on terrorism.

"... Human rights organizations believe there are some 460 detainees in Guantanamo, some of whom have stayed there for more than four years without any charges filed against them."

- "The next empire"

Marcelo Cantelmi, international editor of leading "Clarín," writes (05/21) "China is leading a crucial change in the world. Its growth is part of a long economic cycle that impacts all over the world.

"Oil prices are owed to this capitalistic revolution launched by the biggest communist political structure of the world.

"In this framework, one should analyze the value of the gigantic dam they have just built disregarding social or environmental costs.

"The purpose is to attend to the giant's voracity of energy and food.

"The question is where the giant will stop. The only certainty is that it will be the next empire."

- "The region and the US"

Left-of-center "Pagina 12" carries an interview with Argentine President Nestor Kirchner, who opines (05/21) "... I believe there will be an interesting political change in the US. I think the role of Brazil and Venezuela is very important for the region... The US has not even remembered about the region, this is reality. It proposes FTAs that are unacceptable in the current framework. With a different US, one that could be more integrated to the region, everything would be easier.

"Asked whether the fact that the US has not set its eyes on the region may have been a circumstantial relative advantage, Kirchner answers 'It is a relative advantage with this policy, and it is a relative disadvantage if there is a more integrating policy for the region.'"

- "South, a wall, and after that..."

Jorge Elias, columnist of daily-of-record "La Nacion," writes (05/21) "... Globalization, ruled by an alleged freedom of movement, turned out to be the victim of a cruel contradiction - if Germany's reunification and the end of the Soviet Union were reasons to be glad, why do the wealthiest countries fence the Southern border... vis--vis the virtual risk posed by an invasion of those who, due to the lack of opportunities in their countries of origin, have to abandon their homes and families in search for a better future?

"... Every wall means a more or less painful scar that protects some while expelling others. Neither the US nor Australia, nor Mexico, nor Argentina, nor any other country that was generous with immigrants would not have conceived of with walls."

- "US: racist groups increase and Hispanics are the new target"

Ana Baron, Washington-based correspondent for leading "Clarín," writes (05/22) "... The latest pro-immigration demonstrations that took place in several cities of the US demonstrated the extreme racism still prevailing in some US groups. In response to those demonstrations, the neo-Nazi Movement, the Ku Klux Klan, the Skinheads and other reactionary groups openly called to terrorist violence including operations with car bombs, attacks with machine guns, and murders of members of the US congress and Senate.

"According to a former journalist of The Miami Herald and the USA Today who now works for the Southern Poverty Law Center, 'The number of neo-Nazi groups operating in the US went from 762 in 2004 to 803 in 2005. During the last five years there has been a 33% increase. There are many reasons to explain this increase, but the increase in the number of Hispanic

immigrants is the most important one.'"

- "K(irchner)'s Braden"

Jorge Lanata, contributor to centrist "Perfil," writes (05/21) "... Mr. Wayne does not speak Spanish and does not know our region well but, according to him, during his job as US Assistant Secretary for Economic and Business Affairs during the Clinton administration, 'the first thing I used to do in the morning was check what was going on with the Argentine economy'...

"Mr. Wayne is concerned about Kirchner's ties with Hugo Chavez, although he knows from Argentine Government officials that 'with Venezuela we only do business, our partnership is not ideological.'

"... According to former diplomat and writer Albino Gomez, 'Peron was an opportunist without any ideology, not even a fascist. This is why it was highly advisable for both Braden and Peron to come to an agreement regardless of what could have publicly been said about their relationship.'

"... The official history of Braden 'versus' Peron has been questioned for good reason - several historians agree to make Braden appear as engaged in conflict with Peron, while both did good business together (just as it has been recently with Kirchner's enemies)... Peron granted airline concessions to his 'enemy' Braden and the two of them reached a deal on oil."

- "Afghanistan again"

Liberal, English-language "Buenos Aires Herald" carries an opinion piece by contributor Gwynne Dyer, who writes (05/22) "The Taliban are back. The resurgence of Taliban attacks in the Pashto-speaking provinces of southern and eastern Afghanistan means that US and other foreign troops in Afghanistan are now taking casualties at the same rate as US troops in Iraq... This was entirely predictable, but almost impossible to prevent given the strategy that the US has pursued since overthrowing the Taliban regime in

late 2001. On the other hand, no alternative strategy could have offered a guarantee of success in Afghanistan either.

"Afghanistan was always the problem from hell for Western strategists, as it was in earlier times for British and Russian strategists. It is an easy country to invade, but an almost impossible country to occupy long-term..."

".. Would the situation improve if they all went home? No; it will probably just jog along as a low-level guerrilla, with occasional peaks of violence like the present and no end in sight. Damned if you do, and damned if you don't."

- "'One should keep a cautious distance from the US and not being hostile to it'"

Telma Luzzani makes an interview with Brazilian political analyst Helio Jaguaribe, who opines (05/21) "'South American integration cannot be performed with a negative, anti-US ideological sign, which will lead nowhere. It must be carried out under the sign of regional autonomy. And this means to keep a cautious distance from Washington, but not being hostile to it. Americans have the resources to torpedo this integration.'"

- "Why is Mercosur fainting"

Leading "Clarín" carries an op-ed piece by Marta Bekerman, professor of Economic Development, School of Economic Sciences, National University of Buenos Aires, who writes (05/22) "Uruguay's announcement that it will start a trade liberalization process with the US does nothing but deepen Mercosur's critical situation."

"... The process started with the Brazilian devaluation and the crisis of neo-liberal policies implies the end of a model of Mercosur and a form of administration that is typical of the '90s."

"... What this has demonstrated is that trade liberalization itself does not have the virtuous effect of diluting asymmetries and even less structural disparities."

13. EDITORIALS

- "The control of hot borders"

An editorial in leading "Clarín" reads (05/22) "The tough anti-immigration measures taken by the US in recent days reflect an increasing concern about illegal immigration and its effects on the US economy and society."

"... The USG decision to militarize the US-Mexican border targets the police aspect of the problem but clearly it does not solve it. It also implies a view that could generate discrimination and biases and that does not honor the US multicultural tradition."

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GUTIERREZ